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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 0840
INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2567

UNCLAS BRIDGETOWN 000906

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (SIPDIS ADDED)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SENV OTRA AC XL

SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE GRANTED TO BERNARD LINK FOR
TRAVEL TO ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

REF: AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 1143

¶1. Embassy Bridgetown welcomes and grants clearance to Bernard E. Link, Regional Environmental Officer, for travel to Antigua and Barbuda June 4-10, 2006. Mr. Link will participate in the Third Caribbean Environmental Forum and Exhibition in collaboration with the 12th Annual Wider Caribbean Waste Management Conference.

¶2. Per reftel, Embassy understands assistance is not required. Mr. Link will stay at the Grand Royal Antiguan Beach Resort, telephone 268/462-3733.

¶3. Embassy Bridgetown requests an outbrief be provided to the Political-Economic Section relating to activities while in the region within 10 working days of completion of travel. Please provide the outbrief by telephone, 246/436-4950 X2230, or by fax at 246/431-0384.

¶4. Entry requirements: Mission policy is that all USG travelers to the region be in possession of a valid passport. Visas are not required for short visits. There is a departure tax of 50 xcd (Eastern Caribbean) dollars or 19 U.S. dollars.

¶5. The exchange rate in Antigua and Barbuda is 2.70 xcd (Eastern Caribbean) dollars for one U.S. dollar. U.S. currency, travelers' checks, and credit cards are routinely and widely accepted.

¶6. The following is general information pertaining to security and health considerations throughout the Eastern Caribbean:

Security

In the Eastern Caribbean, foot travel outside of well-established tourist areas is not generally recommended, especially at night. Be vigilant when using public telephones or ATM machines near roadsides or quiet areas. As in many U.S. metropolitan areas, wearing expensive jewelry, carrying expensive objects, or carrying large amounts of cash should be avoided. Visitors should also safeguard valuables while at the beach. While hotels are generally safe, many visitors have experienced loss of unattended items. Hotel burglaries are not uncommon and all valuables should be locked in room safes if possible.

Health

Throughout the Eastern Caribbean, the most likely threat to a visitor's health is sunburn. It takes several weeks to become accustomed to the heat and humidity. Prolonged exposure to the sun, without protection, causes sunburn and may ultimately result in sun-damaged skin or even skin cancer. Sunscreens should be used for protection. In Barbados, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines the major health threat is dengue fever, transmitted by mosquito.

Dengue cases are most often seen in the summer months. Persons should therefore protect themselves with insect repellent. There is a growing number of HIV/AIDS cases reported. The Eastern Caribbean enjoys clean and safe drinking water. Only routine boosters for immunizations (i.e., tetanus, diphtheria, and oral polio vaccine) are required when traveling to this region. Barbados has the best medical facilities of all the islands in the region and most of the medical specialties have practitioners here.

KRAMER